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# THE CRISIS AND THE MAN

AN EPISODE IN CIVIL WAR JOURNALISM

BY

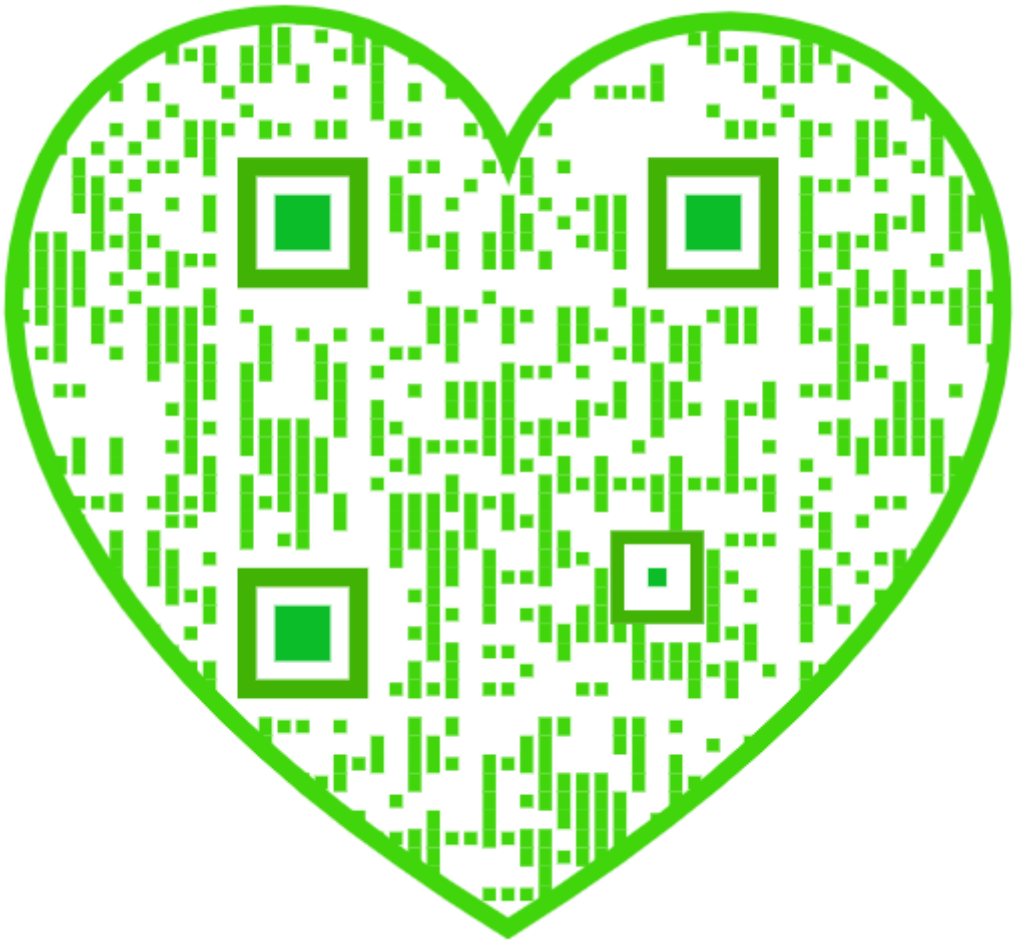
OSMAN CASTLE HOOPER

*Professor of Journalism in The Ohio State University*

CONTRIBUTIONS IN JOURNALISM NO. 5

STATE
Ohio

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS
COLUMBUS MCMXXIX



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SAMUEL MEDARY

*(1801–1864)*

# THE CRISIS AND THE MAN

*By* Osman C. Hooper

On the twelfth of April, 1861, a member of the Ohio Senate excitedly entered the chamber from the lobby and, catching the eye of the presiding officer, exclaimed:

"Mr. President, the telegraph announces that the secessionists are bombarding Fort Sumter!"

There was a solemn and painful hush which was in a moment broken by a woman's shrill voice from the spectators' seats, crying, "Glory to God!"

The voice was that of Abby Kelly Foster who had been attending the sessions of the General Assembly in the interest of a bill enlarging the legal rights of women. She was a radical friend of the slave and, after years of agitation, had come to the conclusion that only by war could slavery be abolished.

But to the members of the Senate, the cry of exultation was startling. It seemed almost as if an enemy were in the room. War to them was a scourge to be dreaded—too great a price to be paid for any good, save the preservation of the Union itself.

While it was in Ohio that Benjamin Lundy had forty years before preached abolition in his Mt. Pleasant paper and organized his society to the same end, and while it was in this state, too, that Charles Hammond and James G. Birney had continued the agitation, winning many to the cause, Ohio—official Ohio at least—was not ready on that issue. Thomas Corwin, in Congress at the head of a committee of thirty-three representatives of the states, had formulated a program which would have prevented any interference by Congress with slavery, and the constitutional amendment that was involved had been ratified by the Ohio Legislature. Moreover, to establish friendly relations with the states immediately to the south, Governor Dennison and the Legislature of Ohio, in 1860, had invited the governors and legislatures of Kentucky and Tennessee to be their guests in Columbus. The invitation had been carried by a committee headed by James A. Garfield to Louisville, where the officials of the two states were celebrating the opening of the Louis-

ville and Nashville Railroad. It had been accepted, and on January 26, 1860, the invited officials had come and for three days had been entertained with all forms of hospitality—receptions, flag-decorated streets, fireworks displays, and a great mass meeting at which the spokesmen of the three states protested their devotion to the Union.

But the effort at conciliation had been abortive. When the Ohio General Assembly met in January, 1861, South Carolina had voted herself out of the Union, and other states of the South were taking steps to similar action. Alive to the danger, the Ohio Legislature still hoped for a peaceful solution. Senator Richard A. Harrison presented, and the Legislature almost unanimously adopted, resolutions recognizing that certain states had passed laws offensive to the South and urging their repeal, but condemning secession and pledging the full power of the state to the support of the Union. The Legislature also responded to a request by the Virginia legislature for a peace conference of the border states, sending a representative committee to Washington for that purpose. The conference was held but accomplished nothing.

Official Ohio was for conciliation and the avoidance of war. But it is not to be doubted that the shrill cry, "Glory to God!" in the Senate chamber expressed the sentiment of a considerable number of the people of the state. Many were weary of talk and ready to fight.

The surrender of Fort Sumter and President Lincoln's call for the troops "to maintain the honor, integrity, and existence of the Union" stirred the state to the depths. The state government and the majority of the people were willing to do anything in the cause described by the President, but there was a shocking state of unpreparedness. The public interest in military affairs had declined so far that any effort in that direction was almost an object of ridicule. The organization of the militia was largely nominal, many high offices being vacant. Muskets, meant for militia drill, had been lost or sold for a trifle. Cannon had been used for firing salutes and had been left to the mercy of the weather. All that the state had to depend on in the exercise of its boasted power was less than a dozen independent companies of volunteer infantry and seven or eight gun squads of artillery. These responded promptly to the call and as organized took the field at once for the campaign in western Virginia.

The task of organizing and equipping an army out of this condition of impotence was undertaken with zeal by Governor Dennison and the great majority of the Legislature, Democrats and Republicans alike. Note the rapid succession of events. Sumter was bombarded April 12; it fell on the 13th; Lincoln issued his call for troops on the 15th; on the 16th, the Ohio Legislature appropriated a million dollars for the war, at the same time adopting the Garfield resolutions defining and providing for the punishment of treason. Before Sumter surrendered twenty regiments were offered to Governor Dennison, and within twenty-four hours after the President's call, troops began to arrive in Columbus. By the 18th there were enough companies to make up the First and Second Volunteer Infantry regiments. Ohio's quota in the first call was 13,000 men; 30,000 responded. The offers of service were so numerous by the first of May that the entire national requirement of 75,000 men might have been met by Ohio.

### OFFICIALS AND LEADING CITIZENS

Columbus in 1860 had a population of less than 19,000. Lorenzo English was Mayor in 1860, and Wray Thomas in 1861-64. Joseph Dowdall was City Clerk in 1860, and was succeeded by J. J. Funston who served several years. James A. Wilcox, City Solicitor, was followed in that office by Francis Collins and H. J. Wylie. Luther Donaldson and Jacob Reinhard during the Civil War period filled the office of President of Council, while as members of Council there were such men as A. B. Buttles, C. P. L. Butler, Theodore Comstock, Isaac Eberly, Horace Wilson, A. S. Glenn, J. J. Rickly, John G. Thompson, Frederick Jaeger, Walstein Failing, E. B. Armstrong, John Graham, James Patterson, John Miller, and William Naghten. Many persons yet living in Columbus know that these men at that time and after were among the most substantial in the professional and commercial life of the city. Most of them were city-builders, as well as office-holders.

Prominent in the citizenship of Columbus were Joseph R. Swan, Samuel Galloway, Joseph H. Geiger, D. W. and Wm. G. Deshler, Dr. J. W. Hamilton, Dr. R. N. Denig, J. P. Bruck, Chauncey N. Olds, Peter Ambos, J. Kilbourn Jones, James M. Elliott, Henry C. Noble, J. W. Andrews, E. E. Shedd, Francis C. Sessions. These

and others whose names are familiar in Columbus history plunged into the maelstrom of war preparations, each doing what he could. And early in the work, there were also women's organizations, including the wives of leading citizens, rendering a very necessary service to the families of soldiers, as well as to the soldiers themselves.

In the gubernatorial office during the war period were in order William Dennison, David Tod and John Brough. Addison P. Russell was Secretary of State, L. R. Critchfield was Attorney General. Henry B. Carrington and C. P. Buckingham in succession served as Adjutant General.

Among the strong men in the Ohio Senate were John Q. Smith, Jacob D. Cox, James A. Garfield, Benjamin Eggleston, William S. Groesbeck, Mills Gardner and Peter Hitchcock, while in the Ohio House of Representatives were Richard C. Parsons, George L. Converse, Otto Dressel, Milton Sayler and William H. West.

Ohio was represented in the United States Senate by Benjamin Wade and George E. Pugh. Pugh was succeeded by Salmon P. Chase, who, on his appointment as Secretary of the Treasury in Lincoln's cabinet, was succeeded by John Sherman. The Ohio delegation in the House of Representatives at Washington included such outstanding figures as George H. Pendleton, Clement L. Vallandigham, Thomas Corwin, R. A. Harrison, Samuel Shellabarger, Samuel S. Cox, John A. Bingham, Robert C. Schenck, Rufus P. Spalding and James A. Garfield. Great names these, and in the history of the city, state and nation they shine for the most part with a goodly light.

### EVENTS EARLY IN 1861

The Ohio Democratic State Convention met in Columbus, January 23, 1861, and adopted the following declaration of principles, as offered by Rufus P. Ranney and amended by Allen G. Thurman:

> That the 200,000 Democrats of Ohio send to the people of the United States both North and South, greeting; and when the people of the North shall have fulfilled their duties to the Constitution and the South, then, and not until then, will it be proper for them to take into consideration the question of the right and propriety of coercion.

On the 28th, a Union meeting, "irrespective of party," was held

which adopted resolutions favoring the Crittenden compromise, and declaring that the Union could not be preserved by force.

Abraham Lincoln, on his way to Washington to assume the office of President, stopped in Columbus, February 13. He briefly addressed the members of the General Assembly who were gathered in the hall of the House, and later spoke to a throng of people at the west entrance to the State House. He was then escorted to the rotunda where, as long as he was physically able, he shook hands with those who pressed in seemingly endless line through the State House. But at last he was compelled to take refuge on the stairway and content himself with looking at the people as they swept by.

Mr. Lincoln's speeches here were both short. He recognized the great responsibility of the office to which he had been called—"greater even than that of the Father of his country." For support in the performance of his great task he must look to the American people and to God who had never forsaken them. For having said little about the policy of his administration, he had been both praised and condemned, but he still thought his silence was justified, since he wished to be free to change his course as future events might make it desirable. A consoling circumstance, he said, was that nobody is really suffering anything, and from that fact it may be inferred that all we need for the settlement of differences is time, patience and reliance on God.

To the people who greeted him at the west front of the Capitol he expressed his thanks for the reception. He felt that they had come without distinction of party. That was as it should be. Had Senator Douglas or any other candidate been elected, the same honor should have been given, quite as much to the office and the country, as to the man. Thanking the people for their greeting, he concluded: "It is not much to me, for I shall very soon pass from you; but we have a large country and a large future before us, and the manifestations of good will toward the government and affection for the Union which you may exhibit are of immense value to you and your posterity forever."

Senator Stephen A. Douglas stopped in Columbus, April 22, en route from Washington to Chicago. He was serenaded some time after midnight and spoke to a great crowd in the street, declaring that the Union must be preserved and the insurrection crushed, and

pledging his support to Mr. Lincoln in doing this. The next day, he spoke by invitation to the General Assembly, declaring that he would never advise, but would resist at all times, a war against the institutions, the property and the constitutional rights of the people of the South. On the other hand he would resist secession, uphold the flag and maintain the authority of the Federal Government. The great Northwest, he said, would never consent that the Gulf States should control the mouth of the Mississippi, or interrupt the free navigation thereof. He called upon all men, irrespective of party, to rally to the defense of the government and its constitutional head, and complimented the citizens of Ohio on the alacrity with which they were responding to the call of the country.

In the meantime, as already indicated, the fever of war had rapidly risen. "Columbus had become," says Alfred E. Lee, Columbus historian, "a center of extraordinary activity and excitement. Not only volunteers, but contractors, office-seekers and adventurers of every kind rushed from all directions to the capital. Every train brought its contingent until the hotels, boarding houses and streets swarmed with strangers. Sunday, April 14, was a day of feverish anxiety and unrest. Churchgoers, as well as street loungers, gathered about the bulletin boards, and the newspaper and telegraph offices were besieged for information. Sumter had fallen; so much was known. But what would be done? A tremendous crisis had come: would the national government be equal to it? The President's proclamation, published on Monday, afforded positive relief. It gave a definite trend to the course of events. A decisive policy was announced at last; the national authority was to be asserted. The time for palaver and concession had passed; the time for action had come."

That was to a degree satisfying, and the efforts that followed were for the most part right-minded. But in the presence of inefficiency for war and the confusion of men and things, there was bound to be error, waste and wrong. The volunteers began to arrive before any provision had been made to feed and shelter them. Many came in civilian dress, some even wearing high silk hats, and found no uniforms ready. Those who had tried to uniform themselves wore red shirts, blue trousers and felt hats. Hotels and boarding houses were soon overflowing. The State House, Starling Medical

College, and the state benevolent institutions and even the penitentiary were requisitioned for shelter. Costly contracts for feeding the volunteers were made, yet many went hungry, and it is recorded that on one occasion a thousand of the recruits raided the hotels and restaurants for the wherewithal to satisfy the cravings of their stomachs. Goodale Park was appropriated for a camp site, and in the absence of tents, sheds were hastily built. The military drill was the thing, and in order to accommodate their clerks who were hot for war, the merchants patriotically resolved to close their stores at 8 o'clock P.M. When Goodale Park proved to be inadequate after two weeks of recruiting, Camp Chase west of the city was established and thereafter served as the principal rendezvous of the volunteers.

### ENTER SAMUEL MEDARY

The situation in Columbus in 1860 and the early months of 1861 has been thus hurriedly sketched that there may be introduced to you the figure of Samuel Medary. He was no stranger to the Columbus of that time. For more than twenty years he had been a resident of this city and for seventeen of those years he had been editor of the *Ohio Statesman*. Twice he sold the paper, but each time, after a short interval, resumed ownership and editorship, always proclaiming in his columns the political doctrines of Andrew Jackson. A vigorous partisan, he had made friends and enemies alike, but the bitterest of his political foes had been ready to concede his ability and honesty of purpose. He had been a good citizen and had done much to promote the interests of the capital. His virile advocacy of Democratic doctrines had made him a name throughout and beyond the state. President Buchanan had appointed him Governor of the Territory of Minnesota; and when that territory was admitted as a state of the Union, had appointed him Governor of Kansas. This latter position he had resigned and now, when the country seemed on the very verge of civil war, was returning to Columbus to do what he could to secure a settlement of the differences of the states without armed conflict. When he left Columbus in 1857 to be a territorial governor, he had been the guest of honor at a dinner, in which Democrats and Republicans had participated, all holding him in respect and wishing for him success in his new task. When he returned, he was not banqueted, chiefly for

the reason that the friends who bade him farewell four years before were sharing in the national alarm or were preparing for the struggle then recognized as inevitable. He was still respected even by those who disagreed with him, and there were doubtless many who, at his coming, hoped that he would be successful in averting war. It was on January 31, 1861, that he launched his paper, *The Crisis*. South Carolina had already seceded, but he was not without hope.

But before taking up his career during the war period, let us review in greater detail his life and service up to that time.

A descendant of Quakers who came to America with William Penn, Samuel Medary was born in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania in 1801, the year in which Thomas Jefferson became President. He was reared in the faith of the Society of Friends, and was educated at the Norristown (Pa.) Academy, and when he was 16 began contributing prose and verse to the *Norristown Herald*. He taught school for a time and continued his study of the higher branches. In 1825 he came to Ohio with twenty-five cents in his pocket, and taught school in Clermont county, boarding with the Simpsons, whose daughter was the wife of Jesse R. Grant and the mother of Ulysses S. Grant, later General of the Union Army and President. Ulysses was at that time a child of three or four, and it is recalled that Medary tickled the mother's vanity by predicting that the boy would some day be President. That may be apocryphal, but it reads well, and it is conceivably true of a young man who was trying to make his way in the world and was aware that friendships count. Whether or not that bit of flattery was a step in Medary's progress, he soon climbed from country school teacher to county surveyor and school trustee, and from that to the elective post of County Auditor. These steps must have been rapidly taken, for in 1828, three years after he landed in Clermont county, we find him establishing, in partnership with Thomas Morris, afterwards United States Senator, the *Ohio Sun* at Bethel, avowedly to support General Andrew Jackson for the Presidency. That paper, now a hundred years old, is still published as the *Clermont Sun* at Batavia. It must have been well founded, and probably had its influence in giving the sixteen electoral votes of Ohio to Jackson that year. Probably also it helped the partners in their own political ambitions, for in 1831 and 1832 Morris sat in the Ohio Senate for

Clermont, and in 1834 Medary was elected to represent Clermont in the Ohio House of Representatives, going to the Senate in 1835 and again in 1836. Then in 1837 he became Supervisor of Public Printing, a post which he held for the next ten years. In 1835 Jacob Medary, a brother of Samuel, bought the *Ohio Monitor* which had been established in Columbus in 1816 by David Smith as the organ of the Democracy, and consolidated it with the *Hemisphere,* publishing the paper under the latter name until 1837, when Samuel Medary became the head of the publishing firm, and changed the name to the *Ohio Statesman.* Thus for a decade, beginning with 1837, Samuel Medary was both State Printer and editor of the Democratic organ published at the capital. He held his public office because his party friends controlled the legislature, and in his editorial role he championed their cause and made enemies of the Whigs. Out of this situation grew a partisan controversy which nearly caused the removal of the capital from Columbus.

### COLUMBUS AS CAPITAL ENDANGERED

It was during the legislative session of 1839-40 that Medary as State Printer was blamed by certain political antagonists for having appropriated to his own use as a perquisite the outside quires of each ream of paper purchased for the state. The charges were referred to a special committee which reported, justifying Medary, on the ground that such quires were "not suitable for the public printing, nor for any other printing of an ordinary character, and that it had long been an established usage among printers to appropriate it to various subordinate and incidental uses about the office, and to consider it as one of the perquisites of their calling."

Medary's critics were persistent, and there were proposals for the execution of public printing on contract. A senate committee was appointed to consider the matter, the majority reporting that public printing was being done more cheaply in Ohio than elsewhere, and opposing the contract system. The minority took the opposite view. Medary, nettled, brought charges that William B. Lloyd, one of the opposition and a member from Cuyahoga, had surreptitiously altered certain accounts against him which had been assigned to a third party. After an investigation, Lloyd was pronounced guilty as charged, and a motion for his expulsion was made, but was lost

because it failed to receive a two-thirds affirmative vote. But Lloyd had been hurt, and a friend circulated in Columbus a testimonial to his probity of character and an assurance of the confidence and good wishes of the signers. Among these were such well known citizens as George M. Parsons, William A. Platt, Alfred Kelley, J. N. Champion and James Kilbourn. Says Lee in his History of Columbus:

> As is usual in such cases, most of the names had been signed thoughtlessly, without intention to give offense, yet such was the resentment provoked by it, and by Mr. Lloyd's reappearance in the House, accompanied to the lobby by some of his partisans, that on the following morning, February 18, 1840, a bill to repeal the act providing for the erection of a new state house in Columbus was reported from the judiciary committee, and a resolution was presented for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the expediency of removing the seat of government from Columbus to Newark, Delaware or Mt. Vernon.

Mr. Spaulding, of Portage county, who presented the resolution, said he wished to have the seat of government removed to some place where the members of the Legislature could be free from insult and interference. He thought the people of Columbus had already received enough from the hands of the state government; that they had hung like leeches upon the body politic and were filled to surfeiting; that no material loss to the state would result from the building project.

Mr. Alexander Waddle, of Clark county, said that the purpose of the resolution was evidently to work vengeance on the people of Columbus for daring to express their opinion, and he therefore offered an amendment instructing the committee to report a bill prohibiting the citizens of Ohio from expressing their opinions of the proceedings of the Legislature in other terms than of unqualified approbation.

Mr. Lloyd, who had vainly asked to be excused from voting, moved to amend the amendment by instructing the committee to report also a bill to remove the penitentiary from Columbus. Mr. Patterson, of Delaware, moved a further amendment for the removal of the Lunatic Asylum. Mr. Lloyd thereupon arose to remark that the Lunatic Asylum was an institution in which the gentleman from Delaware could have no personal interest, for he

must be among those to whom the Almighty in His wisdom and benevolence had denied perception.

Mr. Patterson, returning to the fray, moved to amend further by adding: "And that the members of the legislature shall first consult the citizens of Columbus upon all matters of importance that may be presented for their action, at least so far as the expulsion of a Whig may be concerned." Mr. Waddle moved to strike out Columbus, as the legislature might possibly sit hereafter in Delaware.

The bill to repeal the act for the erection of a new State House was defeated by a tie vote—32 to 32, but the Spaulding resolution to appoint a committee to consider the advisability of removing the state capital from Columbus, when it had been cleared of all amendments, was adopted, 37 to 27. A week later, the bill repealing the act providing for the erection of the new State House was passed by both branches of the legislature.

Partisan bitterness was the most conspicuous feature of the upheaval, but underlying that, it is agreed by historians, there was a real doubt of the financial ability of the state to proceed with the structure on which $40,000 had already been spent.

For three years further proceedings were in doubt, and then on a proposal by citizens of Newark to erect there without expense to the state the necessary buildings for state offices and the Legislature, if the capital were removed thither, the Senate voted yes, 18 to 16, but the House voted no, 36 to 29. And so ended the last of the attempts to move the capital from Columbus.

### IN THE 1840 CAMPAIGN

An incident of the tremendously emotional campaign of 1840, when Medary had been publishing the *Statesman* for three years, well shows how deep a dent he had made in the Whig consciousness. I quote the account of it which is found in Randall and Ryan's "History of Ohio":

> John W. Bear, of Zanesville, had sprung into fame as the "Buckeye Blacksmith." He had great native power of oratory, and his fluency of speech was accentuated by eccentricity of person and attire. At the great Harrison ratification meeting, which was held in the rain in Broad street just west of High, Bear appeared clad in blacksmith clothes, with leathern apron and tongs, and his face begrimed as though he had just come from the forge. Recognized by some of the Whigs of Zanesville, he was called

out for a speech. . . . One of the local subjects of Whig attack was Sam Medary and his paper, the *Ohio Statesman*. . . . As their chief opponent by reason of the great influence of his newspaper and his pugnacious editorials, Medary was especially obnoxious to Ohio Whigs. Responding to this sentiment, and doubtless under the instruction of party leaders, the "Buckeye Blacksmith" devoted a great deal of time with evident pleasure to flaying Sam Medary, which he did with torrents of abuse and invective. As he afterwards himself told it: "I had prepared a boy with blacksmith's tongs and a basin of water, some soap and a towel. When it was my turn to speak, I stepped forward with leather apron on, sleeves rolled up and tongs in hand, ready for business, amid the shouts of the multitude. When order was restored, I said: Gentlemen of the convention, I have a very dirty job to do, so I have my tongs with me, as you see. Medary's paper was lying on the stand. I lifted it up with the tongs, and read a short paragraph from it, let it fall and wiped my feet on it. Then I called for soap and water, washed the tongs and sent them to their owner, as I said, without defiling them with such a dirty thing as Sam Medary's paper. This caused the wildest excitement I ever saw."

The historians, admitting the accuracy of the account, remark that "it does not argue much for the intellectual grade of a campaign and an electorate that crowned this character as one of its most potent influences."

In 1842, while Thomas Corwin was Governor, the Whig members of the Legislature, to prevent a Democratic gerrymander for congressional purposes, resigned, leaving each branch without a quorum. Asked by the remaining legislators what they should do, Corwin told them their only course was to compel enough members to attend to make a quorum. Accordingly the sergeants-at-arms were sent out with warrants for the arrest of the recalcitrant members. But the officers, according to the *Statesman*, were followed by a disorderly mob and insulted. This charge created quite a commotion. The Democrats of the Legislature, either from what they saw or wanted to see, believed it, while a committee of Columbus citizens who made an investigation, denied it. How there could well have been a question of fact in a community so small, it is difficult to understand. But the difference of opinion persisted, and the Democratic dislike of Columbus as a state capital was increased.

But there was some consolation for the Democrats in the succeeding election when Corwin was beaten for Governor by Wilson Shannon, and the Legislature became reliably Democratic again.

Medary in the *Ohio Statesman* jeered the defeated Whigs in a comic illustration, representing Corwin, Kelley, Ewing, Wright and Powell en route to Salt River, with the accompanying doggerel:

Banks is obsolete,
Coons is obsoleter;
Cider some thinks sweet,
But vinegar's more sweeter.

### NON-POLITICAL INTERESTS

Samuel Medary was one of the promoters of agriculture and horticulture in Ohio. He was one of Franklin county's representatives in a state agricultural convention in Columbus, June 25, 1845. There were 200 delegates from thirty counties. Former Governor Allen Trimble was chairman and Medary was one of three vice chairmen. A state Board of Agriculture was appointed, and the creation of county boards was planned. The General Assembly was asked to appropriate $7,000 annually for the state and county boards. In the following February, the General Assembly complied with the request, naming 53 persons as members of the first board. Samuel Medary was a member of the board and its first secretary. The following year when the membership of the board was reduced to 10, Medary was one of the ten. But for the epidemic of cholera, the first State Fair would have been held in Columbus, largely through the influence of Medary and Michael L. Sullivant. Under the circumstances it was held at Camp Washington, Cincinnati, in 1850. Medary was also one of the organizers of the Columbus Horticultural Society.

In July, 1849, he headed a citizens' committee to confer with the City Council as to sanitary measures to ward off the cholera. Council created a Board of Health which doubtless would have done something, if it had known what to do. As it was, about 200 persons in the city and 116 in the Penitentiary died of the disease before it abated.

Medary was deeply interested in the construction of railroads, being one of the incorporators and a director in four roads—the Franklin & Ohio River Company, which was to build a road from Columbus south; the Columbus and Xenia; the Columbus and Lake Erie Company, which was reorganized under the charter of the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Company; and the Central Ohio

Company, which was authorized to build a road from Columbus, via Newark and Zanesville to the Ohio river. All these roads were chartered in the period from 1845 to 1851. Three of them were built, and all of them eventually became prosperous.

### IN THE MEXICAN WAR

In view of his Quaker descent, Samuel Medary might have been expected to oppose the war with Mexico. But he did not. It was the policy of the Polk administration. And so while Allen G. Thurman in the House of Representatives in Washington was supporting the war appropriation and replying to the speeches of Giddings, Delano and others, we find the *Ohio Statesman* commending the companies that were locally organized; while when it was desired to present a sword to Colonel George W. Morgan, of the Second Regiment, Medary was chairman of the committee to raise the necessary funds. When the Columbus troops returned in July, 1848, there was a tumultuous welcome at Jaeger's orchard, near what is now Washington Park, and Samuel Medary was the orator of the day. On this occasion the *Statesman* said:

As the procession passed the State House, the troops were met by a band of 54 young girls dressed in white, supporting a vast wreath of oak and evergreen, with which they encircled the volunteers, and thus marched with them to the place of reception. The large gateway of the orchard was formed into a triumphal arch; rare flowers were mingled with the evergreen and oak, the whole being surmounted and decorated with flags. On the left of the arch and forming a part of it was the American shield, on the right, the American eagle, and in the center the words in German, "Honor the brave." This arch was the work of our German friends. The procession of young ladies which surrounded the volunteers and led them captive was the work of the German fair, and as they passed down High Street, the beauty and appropriateness of the compliment made them the observed of all observers. As the procession moved into the orchard, the German volunteers were received by two young ladies speaking in the language of their "Faderland."

### URGED CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Medary's part in the calling of the second Constitutional Convention was important. Randall and Ryan in their history of Ohio say that he was "the most ardent and effective advocate of the revision of the Constitution." They add:

He was for many years one of the most active Democratic leaders of the state, and was a man of brilliant attainments, wielding a facile and aggres-

sive pen. Not only did he advocate the holding of a Constitutional Convention through the columns of his paper (the *Statesman)*, but on May 6, 1849, he commenced the publication of *The New Constitution*, a weekly magazine, octavo size, devoted entirely to the cause. This publication contained, in addition to the views of the editor, numerous and extended reports of opinions of the press throughout the state, favorable to the holding of a convention. It can be said that probably no other agency exercised so great an influence in the canvass as did this magazine.

Its arguments in favor of the convention were couched in strong and convincing terms, and it called to its aid some of the best political writers in the state. Its claims for a new Constitution can be summarized as follows:

1. That the first Constitution had been hastily and loosely drawn; that it had never been submitted to the people; that the state had outgrown the usefulness and limitations of that instrument.
2. That the judiciary system of the state should be thoroughly revised to the end that justice might be done without vexatious delay.
3. That the sessions of the General Assembly should be held biennially, instead of annually.
4. That provision should be made requiring the General Assembly to refer every measure increasing the state debt to a vote of the people.
5. That state officers, including judges, should be elected by the people.
6. That corporations should be formed only under general laws.

At the fall election of 1849, when the question of holding a Constitutional Convention was submitted, the proposition was carried by a vote of 145,698 for 51,161 against, 38,511 electors who went to the polls not voting on that question. The political complexion of the Convention resulting from a subsequent election was Democratic, sixty-eight of the 108 delegates being of that faith. The majority recognized Samuel Medary by electing him printer and publisher of the debates. When the Constitution as thus framed was submitted to the people at a special election in June, 1851, it was adopted by a vote of 125,564 to 109,276.

Thus had Samuel Medary signally helped to put more Jefferson-Jacksonism into the Constitution of Ohio. He was still marching under the banner that he raised in 1828 in the *Ohio Sun:*

> Unawed by the influence of the rich, the great, or the noble, the people must be heard and their rights respected.

### SYMPATHIZER WITH THE OPPRESSED

When Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, visited Columbus, in February, 1852, elaborate preparation had been made for his re-

ception by both city and state. He and his party were met by officers of the state, members of the General Assembly, the military and fire companies and beneficial and industrial associations, and a vast throng of people. There was an informal reception at the Neil House, and in the evening a parade by the fire companies with torches and banners. "It was," said Medary's paper, "one of the most splendid and enthusiastic outbursts of popular feeling ever witnessed in this part of creation." There were several public meetings and speeches by Kossuth. A State Hungarian Association was organized with Governor Reuben Wood as president and Samuel Medary as a member of the central committee, and money was contributed, as at all places where Kossuth stopped, to promote the cause of Hungarian independence.

But the City Council, probably influenced by political considerations, had refused to take any part officially in the reception. A public meeting was called to protest against this attitude and was held in the City Hall which, it was said, "was crowded to suffocation." Samuel Medary presided, addresses were made and resolutions rebuking the recalcitrant councilmen by name were adopted. This incident probably swelled the amount of the contributions to the cause which amounted for Columbus to about $2000, and for the state to $16,000.

When a party of American filibusters failed in an attempt to bring about a revolution in Cuba in 1851, fifty of them being captured and shot, there was a meeting of Columbus citizens to express sympathy with the revolutionists. Samuel Galloway, Samuel Medary and General Worthington addressed the meeting, resolutions denouncing the inhuman butchery by the Spanish government were adopted, and there were three cheers for Cuban independence.

When in 1852 Thomas Francis Meagher, an Irish revolutionist, escaped from Tasmania, to which he had been exiled by the British government, a public meeting was held in the City Hall to express sympathy with him. William Dennison and Samuel Medary spoke, and a committee, with Colonel John Noble as chairman, was appointed to invite Meagher to visit Columbus.

It is said of Medary that he was the originator of the slogan, "Fifty-four, forty, or fight!" which was current in the 40's when the dispute with England over the northwest boundary was acute.

But I can find no authority for the statement, and as the slogan, though it was popular with the Democrats of the time, is so foreign to his general principle of settling differences by peaceful methods, I do not give it credence. An alliterative phrase, it appealed to the emotions of the crowd. It doubtless made the settlement of the dispute more difficult, but it did not prevent the acceptance by both countries of the 49th parallel as the boundary line.

It is enough to say of him that through all the mutations of a turbulent political period, he remained a Jefferson-Jacksonian Democrat. He lived and wrote at a time when newspapers were, first of all, advocates of political causes. He fought with Jackson in the war on the United States Bank and on the South Carolina nullification movement. He championed Van Buren in 1840 and went unscathed through the Michigan boundary war with Governor Lucas. He commented on the doings of the Free Soilers, the Barnburners and the Hunkers. He saw the dissolution of the Whig party and the birth of the Republican, and in Ohio the building of the canals and railroads and the development of the public school system. If there was an issue during his career as editor on which he did not have an opinion and the courage to express it, there has been no discovery of it. As an editor of strong convictions, he rendered an exciting and seasoning service.

## TO PREVENT THE WAR OF THE STATES

Such was the man who returned to Columbus at the end of 1860 in the hope that he might by an appeal to reason prevent the war of the states, or, if not to prevent, to end it as soon as possible. He established an editorial office at the corner of High and Gay Streets, contracting for the printing at the large job office of Richard Nevins, half a square north, and issued the first number of the *Crisis*, January 31, 1861. The *Crisis* was an eight-page paper, with five wide columns to the page, set solid with none of the display heads so familiar now. In his prospectus he promised that the paper would be "compactly filled with matter especially prepared for its columns; that every labor and expense would be bestowed upon it to make it one of the best weeklies in the country—clear of floating trash and full of the most solid and useful matter to suit the fearful times that surround us."

Any reader of the *Crisis* will agree that his promise was abundantly kept. His appeal was to the intellect—only occasionally to the emotions—an appeal which is sufficiently noble, but in war-time always futile. There was not an advertisement in the first issue and, though advertisements appeared later to the extent of two or three columns, they were never in sufficient volume to make the venture a modern financial success. He was dependent chiefly for revenue on subscriptions at $2 a year. So far as I have been able to discover, he never published the actual number of his subscriptions, but he did state—and it was not denied—that he had a larger circulation than any of the other local papers. However, he was not out to make money, but to advocate a cause, and he was apparently content.

In the contents of the first issue one gets a glimpse of his editorial plan. Washington's Farewell Address was reprinted in full; and there was the text of his own address to the people of Kansas on leaving the governorship, as well as his address to the Democrats of Ohio. The proceedings in Congress and committees, the last week in the previous December; the text of President Buchanan's special message to Congress of January 9; a report of the Democratic State Convention of January 23; fourteen columns of editorials and two columns of general news paragraphs, original or copied with credit, filled the remaining columns.

Here was a man who had much to say. And what was it? In brief, that both North and South had made mistakes—the North in temporizing in conference with Southern leaders, and in seeking to save the Republican party at the expense of the Union; the South, in the hasty acts of secession that had already taken six states out of the Union, and in subsequent hostile acts. He held that this was a political quarrel growing out of men's aspirations for place and their differences of opinion as to great constitutional questions. In discussing the condition of the country, he said:

> We oppose men, not face to face, which modifies misrepresentation by evidences of truth before our eyes and by the dangers of personal chastisement, but give rein to tongue and imagination because the party attacked is not near to contradict or explain, or make personal defense of any kind. Hence the character of political speeches that we have heard all around us for years. They were hurled against states and the people of states far from the scenes where the attacks were made. Slander and defamation ran riot over the land.

Washington's Farewell Address was reprinted to call attention to three warnings: against sectional politics, against bitterness of party strife, and against the interference and intermeddling of foreign nations which, Medary thought, would all be happy in our distress.

In his address to the Ohio Democrats, Medary said: "The errors of the past will hardly be acknowledged by their authors, but this is a government of the people, and it is they who have got to take the country in their own hands and save it from the impending ruin, if it is saved at all. And it can only be done by that old Democratic and Constitutional party forming a nucleus around which the patriotic can rally."

He held that the Republican party contained an element, larger than supposed, "resolved on revolution and vengeance. Fanatical, mischievous, reckless, with a secret organization of its own, feeling its strength and importance for evil, it will be wholly uncontrollable. It has no object in its existence but that of disorder, and no higher aims than those of exercising God's vengeance as they understand it."

Medary expressed the belief that, if the Democrats of Ohio took the proper stand, the conservatives in the states of Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania could be relied upon to help. Massachusetts in the North and South Carolina in the South would concede nothing; they were the extremists that had forced the great issue.

To appreciate the daring of these sentiments, one must remember that Medary was addressing the people of Ohio who had just put the Republicans in power and who, by overt acts of various kinds, were being prepared emotionally for war. Even the Democrats were divided.

### SLAVERY AND STATE SOVEREIGNTY

What were Medary's views on slavery? is a pertinent question. The best answer is probably to be found in the message that he wrote while Governor of the Territory of Kansas, vetoing a bill of the Legislature declaring slavery or involuntary servitude illegal, except as punishment of crime. He reprinted the entire message in No. 29 of the *Crisis*, at the invitation of a reader.

The original states, he argued, formed the Union, with the right

of decision as to slavery in their own hands. All other states, when admitted, should have the same right. The abolition movement was one which deprived the new states of that right. Slavery, he held, was a state matter, its determination being left to the people of each state. "You," he said to the legislators of Kansas, "can pass laws regulating the condition of master and slave, or you can repeal such laws, or refuse to pass them; but you lack the sovereignty necessary to create a slave or wrest him from his owner. That is a power which clear, undisputed sovereignty alone can exercise, and it must be done by the sovereign himself in convention assembled. In that capacity, you adopted a clause in your constitution, at Wyandotte, declaring that slavery should never exist in the state of Kansas. No one is silly enough to dispute that right; and had you declared that it should exist in the state of Kansas, the right was equally clear, and none ever disputed it but the old John Adams school of strong constructionists and illegitimate Republicanism, of royal and imperial dictation over the states, of intermeddling by constitutional constructions, and deranging the order of things generally." He held that Congress was not sovereign over the states; it was more of a subject than a sovereign. "Neither are territories sovereign, because sovereignty can exist only in the states and in the people. And until the people of a territory exercise the rights of sovereignty in the only possible way, as a co-equal state, the sovereignty is quiescent, inactive and powerless."

For Medary, then, slavery was a matter to be dealt with only by the people of a state, and every state could thus settle it without interference by any others or all the others together. He refused to consider it as a moral issue, as an increasing number of people were doing. He felt that it would be his business only as a citizen of a state in which the people were about to declare themselves one way or another, and that situation was not then before him.

### WHY HE OPPOSED WAR

In No. 21 of the *Crisis* Medary clearly stated his reasons for opposing the war of the states. They were:

1. Because it would not in any country based on public opinion accomplish the end desired.

2. Because it would entail a debt and bring misery on the people disproportioned to the benefits that could possibly accrue.

3. Because he opposed a division of the states, and feared that the war would accomplish dissolution, or result in perpetual war.

These reasons he presented in various ways. He is continually reminding his readers of the doctrines of the Fathers of the Republic, selecting, of course, those of which he approves. Frequently he reverts to Andrew Jackson, who is evidently his ideal statesman. He reproduces the documents of the Jackson campaign of 1828, revealing the principles on which the John Quincy Adams party undertook but failed to carry the election and which they had continued to use unsuccessfully till 1860. He reprints Jackson's message vetoing the United States Bank bill in 1832, holding that its doctrines are fundamental in currency matters pressing in 1862. He even reprints the Constitution of the United States, and the correspondence beween Adams and Jefferson, hoping that, if his readers will go back to the fundamentals in their thinking, they will not be so likely to be swept off their feet by the passion of the hour.

The long speeches of Vallandigham and Breckinridge in Congress and elsewhere, and of Allen G. Thurman and other leading Democrats in the state conventions are printed in full. He prints much of the proceedings in Congress, particularly with regard to the withdrawal of the Southern states and the debates on the conduct of the war; the text of Vallandigham's resolution proposing a constitutional amendment dividing the states into four groups, and many other documents which have a bearing on the war and may help to drive home the arguments he is presenting.

In July, 1861, he tells his readers that according to the best estimates, the war is costing $50,000 an hour, and he dilates from history on the evil of a great debt.

He prints letters from the front and other accounts touching the horrors of battle, the lists of killed and wounded and the deaths of Union soldiers in field and hospital. He publishes the letters of General Halleck on shoddy contractors. "From every quarter," he writes, "comes the startling cry of most astounding frauds and thefts. The very charity goods of the ladies have been stolen from the sick. From the highest government officer to the lowest army follower, the practice has been the same." He reports the debate in Congress over an investigation of profiteering. Along with this he praises the bravery of the Ohio troops in battle, always referring

to them as "our boys." He is ever employing good psychology in lauding the volunteers and condemning those in authority who are hurling them into danger and death.

"We have no personal aspirations," he says. "We are closing the career of a long and active life in one more effort for our country. When most men retire, inactive spectators of passing events, we have launched our bark in the open sea to combat waves and winds that youth generally, if not alone, enjoy because they love excitement, and are ignorant of the dangers they encounter. . . . For a time we shall—as we have experience enough to expect—receive a cold shoulder from all corrupt cliques and combinations of schemers, for they are aware that no threats or bribes can in the least reach us. They know also that the people are pressed down by taxes brought on them by just such secret plunderers, and that a little more oppression will force an inquiry and close scrutiny into the meaning and causes of such a state of things, differing so widely from the repeated promises made to get their votes."

Abolitionism he declares is the cause of the war, and Horace Greeley its particular gadfly, a notorious incendiary. After the battle of Bull Run, Medary wrote:

> That this movement was hurried out of the order intended by General Scott is well known, and the foolish editors who know too much for their calling and too little to know that they are very ignorant are more to blame for this than the officers in command. . . . We rejoice that the list of dead and wounded is no greater, but the consequences on our future are terrific, as time will prove. The windy heroes who edit papers and blow and puff in Congress should be put into the ranks and drilled to the sublime realities of looking into the mouth of a 10-inch loaded rifled cannon in the hands of the enemy. . . . That our men fought bravely, as far as they were able to do so, will no doubt be admitted by the Confederates.

At the end of the first year of war, Medary wrote: "Has this fatal war been anything, so far, than one series of plunder and theft? A half million soldiers have been kept in the field, half-officered and frequently half-fed, that another army of loafers and pickpockets, picked from the street corners and dens of Abolitionism, might riot in public plunder, and bring the whole nation to ruin, bankruptcy, death and mourning."

A little later in an editorial on the conduct of the war, he de-

clared: "The wicked Abolition element, which has fed the fire of sectionalism with the fuel of their own creation, has shown from the first that they were as ignorant as Hottentots and as barbarous as Fiji islanders. They have labored incessantly to convert the war into one of desolation and vengeance. They appear to have no higher notion of the art of war than they have of the true science of peace. They must be put aside, driven from the position of dictators or advisers, and cast out of the councils of the brave, the patriotic and the just."

### HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD LINCOLN

Medary's attitude toward Lincoln was at first one of indifference. When the President-elect visited Columbus on his way to Washington, the *Crisis* reported the fact without offensive comment. There was this item of editorialized news:

> Last evening the President-elect visited the State House, where the ladies were received and introduced. We were not present, but no doubt all were well pleased. We did not see Mr. Lincoln only at a distance, but found Mrs. Lincoln an unassuming and agreeable lady, and hope she may find in the White House as much satisfaction as in her more modest and retired home in Illinois.

There was no attempt to belittle the demonstration here, but later the speeches that Lincoln made en route to Washington were collected and criticized. When Jefferson Davis was inaugurated at Montgomery, Alabama, he and Lincoln were compared. "Mr. Davis," said the *Crisis*, "has the vantage ground in intellect and directness of speech. Lincoln's track is very serpentine and his speeches Delphian. Davis was educated in the arts of war, and Lincoln in the art of rail-splitting. Davis was a prominent soldier and officer in the Mexican war, and Lincoln was at the same time in Congress, poking fun at the army. Davis is great on making rifles crack, and Lincoln is great on cracking a joke. Davis is always grave and serious, but Lincoln is always funny."

About the first of June, 1861, Medary copies from the *Philadelphia Dispatch* the following New York letter about Mrs. Lincoln's shopping in New York:

> She has no apprehension that Jeff Davis will make good his threat to occupy the White House in July, for she is spending thousands and thousands of dollars for articles of luxurious taste in a household way that it would be preposterous for her to use out in her rural home in Illinois. The

silver plate from Houghwout, and the china service from the same, all with the United States coat-of-arms emblazoned on them, will admirably suit the mulberry-colored livery of her footman and other servants in Washington, and probably may help very nicely to get rid of the apparently exhaustless $25,000 a year salary of Mr. Lincoln. So may the elegant black point-lace shawls she bought at Stewart's for $650 each, and the real camel's-hair cashmere at $1,000. . . Let me do Mrs. Lincoln the credit to say that she was dreadfully importuned to enter into extravagances of various kinds, but I heard her myself observe at Stewart's that she could not afford it and was determined to be very economical.

In the spring of 1862, the *Crisis* quotes this from a Washington letter to the *Springfield Republican:* "Abraham Lincoln looks very awkward in white kid gloves, and feels uncomfortable in new boots. Mrs. Lincoln is very dumpy and very good-natured, and very gorgeous; she stuns me with her low-necked dresses and the flower-beds which she carries on top of her head."

A little later in the year, apropos of the coming of Artemus Ward to Columbus, the *Crisis* quotes the humorist's account of his visit at the White House, as follows:

I called for Abe. He received me kindly. I handed him my umbreller and told him I'd have a check for it, please.

"That," said Abe, "reminds me of a little story. There was a man in our parts so mean that he took his wife's coffin out the back winder for fear he'd rub the paint off the doorway."

As the war progressed, Medary seems to have come into a better opinion of Lincoln and his usefulness in healing the wounds of war, for he urges Lincoln not to put himself in places of danger. "He is 1000 per cent better than Hamlin," he adds.

### THE FEAR OF BLACK DOMINATION

One of Medary's appeals for sentiment that would stop the war was the prospective domination of the Negro. He quotes Artemus Ward's speech at the little red school house:

Feller-Citizens, the African may be our brother. Several hily respectable gentlemen and some talented females tell us so. And fer argument's sake, I might be injuced to grant it, though I don't believe it myself. But the African isn't our sister, and our wife and our uncle. He isn't several of our brothers and all our first wife's relations. He isn't our grandfather, our great grandfather, and our aunt in the country. Scarcely, and yet numerous persons would have us think so. It's true he runs Congress and other public groceries, but he ain't everybody . . . But we've got the African,

or rather he has got us, and now what are we going to do about it? . . . It's a pity he couldn't go off somewhere quietly by hisself where he could wear red weskits and speckled neckties and gratify his ambition in various interesting ways without having an eternal fuss kicked up about him.

Medary gravely presents the possibility of a slave insurrection. He prints a story of a Negro who, because he had to wait for the second table in the home where he was employed, was so indignant that he burned the Free Presbyterian Church, of which the man who offered him this indignity was pastor.

He reports the circulation of petitions in Ohio against the admission of free Negroes to Ohio. He resents the passage of the bill abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, holding that the act will make the District a depot for free Negroes and runaway slaves. "The Negro," he adds, "is clearly in the ascendant. This is no time for white folks."

With glee he quotes the *Louisville Democrat:* "The Abolitionists propose to elevate the black race. Nothing but hemp could do the same thing properly for them."

### THE BANKERS' FAINT RESPONSE

When the General Assembly authorized a three-million-dollar loan, the *Crisis* reports that the Ohio bankers met and subscribed $300,000. "Where is the money to carry on the war coming from?" it asked. "Who are the traitors now? Who are aiding the enemy by refusing to aid our friends?"

In a later issue, the *Crisis* says on the same subject: "The Ohio banks having refused to take the Ohio loan, the state officers have appealed to the people to take the bonds as low as $100. Now if Ohio bonds are at so low a figure that the banks refuse them, why palm them off on the people?" He insists that "the banks should be compelled by public sentiment to take the loan, that the army may be kept in the field, if it is needed for our safety."

The *Cincinnati Gazette* is quoted, on the refusal of the Cincinnati City Council to loan $50,000 on state bonds: "If the state government wants any more money from council or capitalists of the city, it must get rid of the odor of robbery which attaches to its purchasing and contracting department, by a prompt and thorough cleaning out."

### THE EXCISE TAX LAW

When the excise tax law was passed, Medary printed it in full, twenty-six and a half columns of solid type, at the same time reporting that there were 300,000 applicants for positions under the law. It was one of the burdens that he wanted the people to appreciate and rebel against. When the *Continental Monthly* held the law up to ridicule, Medary joyously reprinted the alleged list of taxes:

> For every button on coat, 3 cents; carrying a cane, $1; carrying lorgnon or quizzing glasses, $1; kissing anybody except relatives, 25 cents each time (engaged couples may commute for $10 a month); for shaking hands with a lady, 10 cents; squeezing said hands, $1; not squeezing said hands, when circumstances favor, $10; for reading your own compositions to anyone, $1; doing same to the editor, or offering to do it, $1,000; for staying later than 11 P. M. when calling, $5 per hour.

Thus with an occasional glint of humor the grim business of trying to stop the war proceeded. Here is a specimen paragraph:

> A member of the rifle corps, who has recently become a father, was asked the other day what he would do with toddlekins, in case he should have to go out to meet the enemy. He replied that, if he went, he would take his child with him. "How will you carry it?" asked the wife. "Oh, strap it on my back," said he. "Oh, don't!" exclaimed the wife, "for then he will be sure to be shot."

When the *Ohio State Journal* applauded Medary for refusing the gubernatorial nomination, adding, "It is a position in which every good citizen will sustain the editor," Medary retorted that he hoped all good citizens would take the gentle hint and subscribe for the *Crisis*, "thus keeping us in our private station."

Medary did not approve the Union tickets for 1862 and 1864. On the former occasion he said that a union could very easily be effected, if the Republicans would all vote the Democratic ticket and thus return their thanks to Democrats for filling up the army.

In July, 1861, the report was circulated that Joshua R. Giddings, great Abolitionist, was to raise a regiment. Medary wondered how he came to think of it so soon.

"The dearest arm of the service," he said, "was the Briga-dier."

Of the Union ticket with Tod for Governor, Medary said: "If the old Republicans are satisfied, we of course have no reason to complain, as it is a step in the right direction; and we pray that the old Democratic party may always so demean itself that it will be

able to furnish its opponents with respectable candidates whenever they get short."

The *Crisis* was a harp sadly out of tune with the war chorus of the other local papers. But it was a harp of many strings: the love of parents for their children and of wives for their husbands; the natural horror at the atrocities of battle and prison; the fear of financial burdens too heavy to be borne; the knowledge that some were profiteering and were certain to come out of the general wreck much richer than they were; the dread of an influx of Negroes and of their elevation by the sentimentalists to a position of superiority; the danger that, do what the people might, the Union would be wrecked.

As Medary struck these strings in turn, there was a notable response. Subscriptions came till he boasted that he had twice as many as any of the other papers. Letters poured in for his columns, showing that there was a wide, though sometimes a secret, admiration for his cause. Wherever there was wrong in the conduct of the public business, Medary was prompt to point it out and vigorous to condemn. This brought him the gratitude of those whose dear ones or belongings were endangered. Even if they disagreed with him as to the necessity of the war, it was good to have a watchman on the heights. To Abolitionists, of course, he was anathema, as they were to him, and one may well believe that office-holders and contractors moved with the fear of Medary in their hearts.

The publication of the *Crisis*, however, was not greatly interfered with. By military order its circulation at Camp Chase and in the military district of western Virginia was stopped; the editorial office was mobbed by soldiers in March, 1863; and in May, 1864, Medary was arrested on an indictment by the federal grand jury for conspiracy, but nothing came of it. There is no doubt that he sorely wounded those in authority in state and nation, and his comments probably retarded and made difficult the draft. But the times were perilous and things might have been worse had the iron hand of an arbitrary government been laid upon him.

When the draft was ordered in August, 1862, the *Crisis* said editorially:

> We are at last owning up that we have rushed into a real, terrible, if not endless, war; and no man, high or low, rich or poor, need hope to

escape its terrors and responsibilities. What many have looked upon as the "dread command" has come. We do not look upon it in that light. It is twice as manly as setting the politicians to run down our young men at $2 a head and an office.

We have but met the stern realities of war; it is at our very doors—and we would have it so. Any one who spoke of peace and a settlement was a traitor and to be hung. And now when you have got just what you would have, it is too late to make wry faces at the first sip of the cup which is running over at the brim.

### THE MOBBING OF THE CRISIS

The mobbing of the *Crisis* office, on the night of March 5, 1863, was an event long to be remembered. The particular reason for it is not clearly stated anywhere. Perhaps there was none; the outburst may have been simply the result of an accumulation of animosities. However, in the issue of the 4th there was an article on an oath-bound secret order among Republicans, with the statement that members of the Union League are sworn to vote in all elections for none but members of that order. Attached to the article was what purported to be the ritual. This was probably the answer to the charge that Medary was a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle—a charge which he vigorously denied.

Whether or not this article was the immediate cause of the violence, the published accounts agree that a mob of 200 citizens and soldiers, late in the evening, marched to the *Crisis* office at the southwest corner of High and Gay Streets, and surrounded it, the soldiers with fixed bayonets preventing anybody from interfering with what was to be done. Medary had gone to Cincinnati, and there was no one in the office at the time. Doors were forced, windows were broken, furniture and books were destroyed, and copies of the *Crisis* were torn and scattered upon the streets. According to a rumor which nowhere was printed, Mrs. Henry Wilson, daughter of Governor Medary, forced her way through the line of guards, and secured her father's most valuable papers. The damage that it was possible to do at the editorial office was not great. There was a desire to smash the press and destroy the type, and so the mob moved half a square north to the Richard Nevins plant where composition and press work were done. But before entrance had been gained there, the city police arrived and dispersed the crowd, from which the

soldiers had gone at the appearance of Colonel Cooper, in command at Camp Chase.

The public was greatly aroused by the affair. The *Ohio State Journal* deplored "the invasion of personal and property rights," and Colonel Cooper issued an order saying that the action of the soldiers was conduct strangely inconsistent with their duty to uphold the law. He characterized the assault as a "cowardly attack and felonious outrage," and warned all soldiers that, if detected in such another offense, they would receive the severest punishment authorized by law.

When Governor Medary returned from Cincinnati the next day, he was met by a throng of friends who bore him on their shoulders to a waiting carriage, removed the horses, and themselves drew the vehicle to the American House, Hemmersbach's band playing a glad welcome home. Allen G. Thurman made a speech of welcome, to which the editor briefly responded. On Saturday afternoon following there was a mass meeting at the Court House to consider what must be done to prevent further mob violence in Columbus. Otto Dressel presided, and there were speeches by Colonel Mannypenny of the *Statesman*, Governor Medary, Judge Rankin and others.

Resolutions, reported by Judge Thurman, were adopted, declaring that the outrage was a natural consequence of that total disregard of the Constitution and the laws that has marked the course of our administrations, federal and state, ever since the war began, and of the false and flagrant assaults upon the patriotism, motives and purposes of the Democratic party, daily indulged in by the Republican press and politicians.

In the next issue of the *Crisis*, Medary says he has been asked to write no exciting comment. This he resents, asking if he has harmed another's printing press, destroyed his property, or alarmed his family. He thanks his friends for their good will, says his property loss is $600 or $800, and adds that he does not blame the soldiers, for they were influenced by Abolition civilians "too cowardly to own their complicity, or perform the gentlemanly work themselves."

This was probably a stroke at Governor Johnson of Tennessee, and ex-Governor Wright of Indiana, who were reported to have

made inflammatory speeches on the day of the mob to the soldiers at Camp Chase.

The net result of the violence was a strengthening of the *Crisis'* position which was probably worth more than the actual property loss.

### ARRESTED FOR CONSPIRACY

Though he could plainly see that he was accomplishing nothing in the way of stopping the war, Medary went on week after week, with unflagging zeal. From near and far, he gathered material for his campaign, printing many documents of the war and making the *Crisis* a repository of information with regard to the progress of the struggle in Congress, in the White House, and in the field, as well as in the political centers of the state. He was not, of course, impartial. He chose and printed that information that would lend itself to his purpose, but there is no indication that he ever falsified a report or garbled a public document. He put his own interpretation on what he printed, but it was always possible for a reader to tell where the document ended and the interpretation began. The conduct of the war was not so blameless that he lacked for material on which to base his condemnation of the war and his lamentation over the loss of lives, the destruction of property and what he considered the wreck of constitutional guarantees. For all those in military and civil authority he was a constant irritant, and it is not strange that in the spring of 1864 he was indicted by the federal grand jury at Cincinnati for conspiracy. He was arrested in his Columbus office and taken to Cincinnati, where he was released on a $3,000 bond, not sought by him, but offered voluntarily by Washington McLean, of the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. For such leniency he would not have asked, and he accepted it, he said, because it was offered by an old friend. He returned to Columbus defiant and eager to know who his accusers were, for these, he insisted, were really the guilty ones. Before he left Cincinnati, he was assured that he would be notified in time for the hearing. Later, he wrote:

> As for our arrest for conspiracy, it is too dirty and vile a business to spend breath over. They dared not even try us and refused to send for us when they assured they would do so, but abandoned the whole thing till next October, without even apprising us of the fact. It is just the thing for the tools of Lincoln despotism to use to injure our paper, and that is all they care about it!

Medary was never put on trial under the indictment. He fell ill soon after his return to Columbus and for months the work on the *Crisis* was carried on by another. He was ill when October came and he died November 7, 1864, at the age of 63, probably hastened to the grave by his extraordinary efforts in the cause of peace and the saving of the Union by the preservation of what he regarded as the constitutional rights of the states.

His death evoked many expressions of admiration and affection. The *Ohio Sun*, at Batavia, which he had founded in 1828, remarked that "his greatest anxiety seemed to arise from the fear that he would outlive constitutional liberty."

The *Cincinnati Commercial* said of him: "He gave up to party what was meant for mankind. That was the sum of his faults."

The editors, publishers and printers of Columbus met November 8 in the City Hall and adopted resolutions recognizing him as "one of the ablest and best, as he was one of the oldest and most distinguished, editors of the state"; "one whose native talent, incorruptible integrity and steady adherence to what he conceived to be correct political principles, were most effective in bringing the Western press to its present high and noble position."

His remains were borne to the grave by a group of distinguished men, including Judge Noah H. Swayne, Judge John L. Green, Judge William B. Thrall, Hon. W. W. Armstrong, Hon. John W. Andrews, Dr. William Trevitt, Dr. John Dawson, W. S. V. Prentiss, and William S. Sullivant. His resting place in Greenlawn is marked by a monument inscribed:

SAMUEL MEDARY
BORN IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA.
FEB. 25, 1801
DIED AT COLUMBUS, OHIO
NOV. 7, 1864

IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS PUBLIC SERVICES, PRIVATE VIRTUES, DISTINGUISHED ABILITY AND DEVOTION TO PRINCIPLE, THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED BY THE DEMOCRACY OF OHIO.

This monument is the visible, tangible evidence of a respect which was widely felt and numerously expressed, both while he lived and when he died. Through the courtesy of Medary W. Stark, and his

mother, who is a granddaughter of Samuel Medary, I have been privileged to examine some of his papers. Among them is a letter marked "confidential," from Martin Van Buren. It was written April 28, 1848, in the year he was the Free Soil candidate for President. Van Buren had served as Vice President with Andrew Jackson, 1832 to 1836, had been President 1836-40, had been defeated for re-election in 1840, and had been defeated for the Democratic nomination in 1844. In this letter he said he had no political ax to grind and was seeking only to re-establish the friendly relations with Medary which he feared had been disturbed by the conduct of others. Some evidence of an unfriendly attitude he thought he had found in the tone of the *Statesman*, and he wished to assure Medary of his esteem and his entire innocence of intention to injure or discredit him. Some suspicion is thrown on the sincerity of the letter by the fact that it closes with the request to "Please destroy this letter," and that later in the year Van Buren was for the third time nominated for President, this time by the Free Soilers, against Zachary Taylor, Whig, and Lewis Cass, Democratic candidate.

There is also a letter from Edwin M. Stanton, dated December 31, 1857, complimenting Medary on the success of his administration as Governor of the Territory of Minnesota, a success in striking contrast with the failure of other territorial governors. Stanton was then an attorney in Washington and was acknowledging the receipt of a copy of Medary's first report.

Another interesting letter is one from President James Buchanan, written from Baltimore, April 17, 1858. Buchanan, who had the previous year appointed Medary to his Minnesota post, laid another tribute at his feet adroitly, as follows:

> Ever since the delivery of a certain speech by a certain temporary presiding officer of a certain national convention, I have great confidence in the tact, judgment and sagacity of a certain Samuel Medary of Ohio. If you know that gentleman, I will thank you to let me know through the mail what he thinks of the probability of the passage of the Senate Kansas bill.

And so the testimony ran, a paean of praise, before and after his death, except for the frequent retorts of his political enemies wounded by him in the long-continued fray. He was generally appraised as a man of strong convictions and the courage to express

them even in the face of the most overwhelming opposition—a man of unquestioned integrity, of tremendous energy and of the highest purpose to do the right as God gave him to see the right,—a dependable friend and a dangerous enemy who would always, however, fight fair.

Samuel Medary, in my judgment, was one of the near-great of his generation. Like all editors, he was unfortunate in that he wrote his record in water and, in his later years, in a torrent that rushed madly against and finally overwhelmed him. The nature of his last illness was never determined. Some said that he had been poisoned with other guests at the National Hotel in Washington; others that he had cancer of the stomach. To me it seems that he succumbed to the mental and physical exertion incident to his fight in an impossible cause.